

# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

THE BIBLE — BOOK DIVINE

Jesus Christ, the Same Yesterday,  
Today, and For Ever

The Great Apostasy

THE ANNIVERSARY OF OUR LORD'S BIRTH  
... AT MEGIDDO

DYNAMIC FAITH

HOUSE CLEANING TIME

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

DIVINE CERTITUDES

# Megiddo Message

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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Please keep it coming!

Horseheads, N. Y.

Dr. & Mrs. J. L. J.

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I have seen light since I received your book, "The Coming of Jesus and Elijah and the Great Battle of Armageddon."

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Alva, Fla.

J. M. P.

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You asked how our garden is progressing. I will leave the Lord to be the Judge, for poor, frail man is liable to put the bright side up.

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North Augusta, Ont.

G. H.

### No False Teaching

Rev. P. J. Thatcher:

My wife and I have been reading the MEGIDDO MESSAGE for several years and have found the one place where there is no false teaching of the Bible regardless of what others claim.

We have the late Rev. Maud Hembree's two books, "The Known Bible," and must say that we have found them a most enlightening work on the teaching of Bible Truths.

I am sending an offering to help send the MESSAGE to others.

Cabool, Mo.

E. L. S.

### Comfort

Sirs:

Enclosed please find a very small amount which is a very small gift compared to comfort I have received since my husband passed away suddenly about a year ago.

Thank you very much.

Raleigh, Miss.

Mrs. D. L.

# The Bible — Book Divine

THE Bible is a book whose words live in the ear like music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church-bells, which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be things rather than mere words. It is a part of the spiritual mind, and the anchor of spiritual seriousness. The power of all the griefs and trials of man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments, and all that has been around him of the highest and best speaks to him out of his Bible.

The Bible is the oldest surviving monument of the springtime of the human intellect. It reveals to us the character and intellect of our great Creator and Final Judge. It opens before us the way of salvation through a Redeemer, unveils to our view the invisible world, and shows us the final destiny of our race. God's Word is, in fact, much like God's world, varied, very rich, very beautiful. You never know when you have exhausted all its merit. The Bible, like nature, has something for every class of minds. Look at the Bible in a new light, and straightway you see some new charm. The Bible goes equally to the cottage of the poor man and the palace of the king. It is woven into literature, and it colors the talk of the street. The bark of the merchant cannot sail to sea without it. No ship of war goes to the conflict but the Bible is there. It enters men's closets, mingling in all the grief and cheerfulness of life.

The Bible is adapted to every possible variety of taste, temperament, culture, and condition. It has strong reasoning for the intellectual. It takes the calm and contemplative to the well-balanced James, and the affectionate to the loving and beloved John. Not only is this book precious to the poor and unlearned, not only is it the consoler of the great middle class of society, both spiritually and mentally speaking, but the scholar and the sage, the intellectual monarch of the age, bow to its authority.

To multitudes of our race not only has it been the foundation of their religious faith, but their daily practical guide as well. It has taken hold of the world as no other book ever did. Not only is it read in all Christian pulpits, but it is accepted as divine, from the palace to the cottage. It blends itself with our daily conversation, and is the silver thread of all our best reading.

In the closet and in the streets, amid temptation and trials, this is man's most faithful attendant and his strongest shield. It is our lamp through the dark valley, and the radiator of our best light from the solemn and unseen future. Stand before it as before a mirror, and you will see there not only your good traits, but your errors, follies, and sins, which you did not imagine were until you thus examined yourself. If you desire to make constant improvement, go to the Bible. It not only shows the way of all progress, but it incites you to go forward. It opens before you a path leading up and still onward, along which ministering angels will bless you, and all that is good will lend you a helping hand.

There is no book so well adapted to improve both the

head and the heart as the Bible. It is a tried book. Its utility is demonstrated by experience; its necessity is confessed by all who have studied the wants of human nature; it has wrung reluctant praise even from the lips of its foes. Other books bespeak their own age; the Bible was made for all ages. Uninspired authors speculate upon truths before made known, and often upon delusive imaginations; the Bible reveals truths before unknown, and otherwise unknowable. It is distinguished for its exact and universal truth. Time and criticism only illustrate and confirm its pages. Successive ages reveal nothing to change the Bible representations of God, nothing to correct the Bible representations of human nature. Passing events fulfill its prophecies, but fail to impeach its allegations.

The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying. A mind rightly disposed will easily discover the image of God's wisdom in the depths of its mysteries, the image of God's sovereignty in the commanding majesty of its style, the image of His unity in the wonderful harmony and symmetry of all its parts, the image of His holiness in the unspotted purity of its precepts, and the image of His goodness in the wonderful tendency of the whole to the welfare of mankind in this world and that to come. We should use the Scriptures not as an arsenal, to be resorted to only for arms and weapons, but as a matchless temple where we delight to contemplate the beauty, the symmetry, and the magnificence of the structure, and to increase our awe and excite our devotion to the Deity there proclaimed.

The cheerless gloom which broods over the understandings of men had never been chased away but for the beams of a supernatural revelation. Men may look with an unfriendly eye on that system of truth which reproves and condemns them; but they little know the loss the world would sustain by subverting its foundations. Men have tried paganism, have tried Mohammedanism, men have tried Deism and philosophy, and we cannot look upon them even with respect. The Scriptures contain the only system of Truth which is left us. If we give up these, we have no others to which we can repair.

"The empire of Caesar is gone; the legions of Rome are moldering in the dust; the avalanches that Napoleon hurled upon Europe have melted away; the pride of the Pharaohs is fallen; the pyramids they raised to be their tombs are sinking every day in the desert sands; Tyre is a rock for bleaching fishermen's nets; Sidon has scarcely left a wreck behind; but the Word of God still survives. All things that threatened to extinguish it have only aided it; and it proves every day how transient is the noblest monument that man can build, how enduring is the least word that God has spoken. Tradition has dug for it a grave; intolerance has lighted for it many a fagot; many a Judas has betrayed it with a kiss; many a Peter has denied it with an oath; many a Demas has forsaken it; but the Word of God still endures."



## Jesus Christ, the Same Yesterday, Today, and For Ever

WE ARE prone to speak of "our changing world," as though change were something new and strange and even terrifying, something peculiar to the twentieth century, and especially the present decade. Yet the fact is that our world has been changing ever since its creation. The long, deliberate changes of physical evolution—the climatic cycles that changed tropical swamps to polar wastes, the volcanic periods, the rising and sinking of continents and mountain chains, the ebb and flow of forgotten seas, the grim march and retreat of the glaciers, the changing conditions that bred and destroyed the dinosaurs—our planet became what it is through constant change, and it is still changing. It is well said that nothing is permanent but change.

Yet in man's immediate world, it often seems that the more things change, the more they remain the same. The centuries bring altered conditions, but no basically new vices or virtues, no new problems. Yet since we are creatures of a moment and each of us has his life to live and his lessons to learn in so short a time, the problems are so new to us that we cast about in desperation for a fixed point, a solid rock to which we may tie amid the tempest of life which buffets us so grievously.

This craving is ageless; through the centuries myriads of inarticulate men and women have eaten their hearts out in the silent, lonely quest for mental and spiritual security; inspired singers and prophets have phrased it in words which even yet move us to tears by their sheer beauty. "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Times have always been bad; civilizations have always been collapsing; old values passing away and new, strange ideas invading the scene.

It was in such a time that the immortal Epistle to the Hebrews was composed. We do not know to whom it was addressed, but it is altogether likely that it was to the mother church in Jerusalem. When the letter was written the catastrophe of A. D. 70, which overthrew the Jewish state, had not occurred but it was impending. If the war was not actually in progress, it must have been close at hand. The oldest church in Christendom was inevitably touched by the confusion and alarm which always accompany such a disaster.

The duration of that church in Jerusalem had not been a long one. In years, it had not stood for as long as our own. Thirty or thirty-five years was a brief life for a church, yet it was the oldest in existence. By comparison, the mixed churches of Galatia, of Corinth and of Rome were young. Every Gentile community of believers felt like a daughter to Jerusalem. It was entering its second generation, and the past to which it could look back was, to say the least, an honorable and a memorable past. It contained the richest and the longest list of departed worthies. Founded by the very Master Himself, its original officers had been the twelve Apostles. Peter and John were its first leaders, James was its first president,

Stephen was its first martyr. Upon its roll of membership there had stood, if they did not still stand, the names of Jesus' own relatives and closest friends; names like Lazarus and Martha, Nicodemus and Joseph, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother, blessed among women.

It is small wonder that the unknown writer exhorted this noble church to remember those who had spoken to them the word of God, and to consider the final issue of their Christian warfare. Yet already it must have seemed to him as though the early force and bloom of the young faith were in danger of passing away from it. The men who saw and handled the Word of Life; the men whose energy founded, whose fervor warmed, whose blood watered the new Church of Christ—where are they? Gone, most of them, to the congregation of the dead. Is, then, the force they wielded gone likewise? Must this young faith grow old and change with the changing generations? Shall its splendid promise fail; shall it prove a prey to mutation, and vanish at last as its predecessor Judaism was ready to vanish away?

The misgiving was a natural one, but it is dispelled as he reflects who and what is the sum and substance of this new-old faith, the heart and soul of this young society. A dead man? Never! A dying man, like himself? A changeable man, over whom the years have power? No. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

But to attain this conviction, at that distance, required a train of evidence beginning in the nation's past. His readers were peculiarly receptive to this line of argument, for the Jewish memory is long—too long, sometimes. One should not despise the past, for in it is our wisdom, the experience of our race, the only criterion of human thought, the only basis of human progress. The Church of Christ is the heir of her own past. That inheritance she never ought to disown. The present grows out of that which has been, and the generation which is now alive has lessons to learn from the generations now dead.

The backward look can be carried too far, as the history of Judaism and of nominal Christianity shows. For instance, spontaneous love for its early leaders and martyrs first prompted a day of yearly remembrance: but by degrees it stiffened into a statutory festival, then into a meaningless holiday bearing the name of a saint, filled with superstitious legend and observance.

Yet somewhere between the extremes of contempt and superstitious veneration lies the right course, the way of salvation, which is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. Christ the truth, the bread which came down from heaven, the eternal principle of which is, Obey and live, disobey and die. Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom we honor today, so perfectly exemplified the Word in His character that the two Christs, the man of Galilee and the truth of Jehovah, are inseparable.

It is fortunate for us, in our human weakness, that we have such a pattern in human flesh to be our tower of strength, for we comprehend persons far better than ab-

stractions. The respect which the world at large pays to the greatness of the Master has made our age the cool of the day of salvation. Men attack the church; they assail avowed Christians, and it is not strange; but who assails Jesus, His teachings and His character?

So it is to the high priest of our profession that the writer of Hebrews points us as an unchanging rock in a world of transition. More than that, he goes far back in time and brings before us the long, glorious procession of the heroes of faith, the mighty "cloud of witnesses" by whose example and inspiration our race has to be run. These are the men and women, flesh and blood like ourselves, who do the impossible by faith in a principle which is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. Consideration of the course of their warfare will lead us to a certain divine conservatism, a loyalty to the best of our heritage, an assurance that we shall not be carried about with divers and strange doctrines.

For the church of Jerusalem, the Christ of yesterday reached back to righteous Abel, all the virtues of past generations being embodied to perfection in their Master, He who was dead but now was alive for evermore. Their today is our yesterday, and our heritage is enriched by the travail of their souls, the struggles which to them seemed so uninspiring and unromantic and ordinary. Today we are in their place; the times are evil and no voice from heaven is heard, and timid hearts are quaking. But today, as yesterday, Jesus Christ abides the same; passed into the heavens, able to save to the uttermost, preparing a Kingdom which cannot be moved. New times bring new perils and impose new labors; but no time can rob us of Him in whose strength all past souls grew strong, or quench or dim the deathless presence which burns on through all the ages. When the procession of the saints has passed from view and we see only the stones and dust of the highway, the voice of the Christ of today rings in our ears: "Go, and do thou likewise."

Our problems are peculiarly ours, or so we imagine, but Christ the truth can provide the answers we need, as He always has. Our world is not that of the past, it is true, but human needs and human emotions are unchanged since the dawn of history; the more complex life becomes the more we are bewildered, and hearts break just as they have always done. No matter how sophisticated we become, the peasant-carpenter of Galilee has a word and a heart-beat for every step of the way. The believing, contrite spirit of a man weary of sin stands as close to the Christ of today as did the soul of John the Beloved. Every temptation withstood, evil subdued, brave confession borne, time of trial endured, what is it but another and another token of how near and helpful and loving is the arm of the eternal Christ?

If Jesus Christ be the same yesterday and today and for ever, there is no reason why His people should not be the same likewise. The challenge is obvious. Old generations had no advantage over us. The fountain of their holiness is open to us. The secret of their success is the secret of ours. The moral principles of the gospel have always worked, and always will. Honesty will always be better than deception, kindness than cruelty. The Golden Rule has never been improved upon and never will be. Those few simple words have leaped across conventional gulfs, across the deep chasms which yawn between race and race, between class and class, between sex and sex,

between age and age. In the Christ-world, character is more important than talent; responsibility is measured according to endowment; neighborliness is to be defined by the circle of necessity and not by the limitations of race; the success of life is to be measured by its secret fidelities and not by its popular triumphs. The consummation of His ideal is in the pregnant word of our Lord: "One is your Master, and ye are all brethren." Who in any age has ever devised a more perfect society?

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The aim of Christ is a man made whole, liberated to his full capacity in body, mind and soul. Any social conditions which thwart this ideal should be changed, and the Christ of yesterday, today and for ever intends to change them—peaceably if the world will, violently if they will not when He comes.

It is the Christ of today who walks beside us, strengthening us with the memory of our heritage, and leading us on to a brilliant eternal future, interpreting His eternal truth in terms of today's needs. His religion is rock-like in its strength, yet it is a pliable, adaptable, spiritual religion, never out of date or out of order. Because He changes not, therefore He is the source of all mobile life, of such change as goes with life and progress. This is a part of the paradox of God. New light He gives; new plans He suggests; new forms He finds or makes; new efforts He inspires; and while the past remains for ever, a growing heritage of instruction, of example, of encouragement, yet in the living present and the men of it He forever lives as the Overseer of our activities and the Rewarder of our toil.

For a blind and slavish worship of days gone by there is no room, because new occasions teach new duties. For a cowardly bemoaning over changed times and departed guides, as though heroism, or truth, or Christian success had been buried in their graves, there is again no room. With us, alive and active and working, is the Christ of today, who was, and is, and is to come. For He is also the Christ of tomorrow—of forever.

The old dilemma, presented by John the Baptist to Jesus, is still the same: "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" We come to him today, consciously or unconsciously, with the same query. Either He is the answer to the yearning cry of our souls and to the problems of a world in trouble, or else we must look to somebody else. We look around and see no other. If He is not the one, then there is no one, and hope is dead. But He is the one, the only one. We need no other, for He fills the horizons of the past and the future, and for our present needs he is all sufficient.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be," but we know that He lives. Christ is not an anachronism. The passing of the centuries does not leave Him far behind. He not only keeps abreast of the times; He goes before. As soon as we have grasped one achievement, He is always in front, striding out toward another. There is no final goal in this Leader's journeyings, this old Leader on the new road. He is ever ahead. He is not dead, but alive for evermore. The Word of our God shall stand for ever; His mercy endureth for ever; His truth can never die; His kingdom shall never be destroyed; He shall reign for ever and ever. His righteous laws and His reign of love shall bless generations yet unborn, as He has blessed and still blesses, for He is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.



# The Great Apostasy

—or Departure from True Religion—

## UTTER DESOLATION

**W**E HAVE seen the apostate power under the simile of a destructive beast who would make merchandise of religion; also as a prostitute woman who would make drunk and then beguile all the inhabitants of the earth.

The prophet Joel describes the resulting spiritual desolation which prevailed upon earth. He uses the language of a husbandman, the more easily to reach and impress a people who were themselves tillers of the soil. A calamity unprecedented and unparalleled was to befall them, a calamity such as had never been experienced by the "old men" of the country, or even their fathers who had been subjects of the Babylonian Captivity. The apostate powers in the figure of locusts, a huge army of them, would invade the country, lay waste the vine, and bark the fig tree.

"What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten. . . . For a nation has come up against my land, powerful and without number; its teeth are lion's teeth, and it has the fangs of a lioness. It has laid waste my vines, and splintered my fig trees; it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down; their branches are made white" (Joel 1:4—7, R.S.V.).

Psalms 80:8 classifies the people of God and the saving knowledge of truth in their possession as a "vine." Jesus, in speaking of the system of divine truth and of Himself as impersonating it, said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." The people of God, as the branches, are expected to yield fruit (John 15:1—8). But this vine, truth and its sustainers, was to be "laid waste." The fig tree, a symbol parallel to that of the vine, would be barked and peeled. Nor was there hope of immediate recovery. Its state of unproductivity was to be of such duration that the branches were said to be made white from long exposure to the elements.

Onward moves the melancholy drama:

"The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished" (Joel 1:10, 11).

Barley and wheat were characteristic products of Palestine. The failure of these crops was a national disaster, minor by comparison, however, with the disaster that should befall the land when the "finest of the wheat" should fail, and when no wine of truth could be had from the vine. We have learned from Revelation 17 that the Mother of Harlots supplies wine which inebriates; but this is the wine which Wisdom mingles—new, sweet, stimulating, wholesome (Prov. 9:5, 6).

It might appear from the reading in Joel 1 that when this plague of locusts overtook the land, the people were

helpless to prevent it. However, verse 11 calls upon the husbandmen, the keepers of the vine of truth, to be *ashamed*, indicating their responsibility for the damage wrought. It is said that the movements of locusts *en masse* are largely determined by the wind, and while fields that are in their path may be laid waste, others at one side may not be affected; and it is possible by vigorous waving to keep a given tract clear of them and thus protect the field from their ravages. From this bit of biological information it is apparent that the husbandmen and vinedressers themselves were at fault. If men of God had maintained a bold and uncompromising front, the locusts could never have invaded the Lord's vineyard. But their powers of resistance weakened. Hence Joel's plea to

"Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God" (1:13).

It is significant to note that no vegetation escaped the plague of locusts.

"The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men" (v. 12).

Always the fruits of righteousness create joy, a joy which cannot be dimmed, because the consciousness that our works are pleasing to God brings the assurance of an abundant future life regardless of present tribulation. When the trees in the garden of the Lord ceased to produce good fruits, they surrendered their hope of immortality at the coming of Christ. Joy withered.

When all effort to bear good fruits ceased, when the goal of moral perfection no longer challenged the will of man, when the reward of eternal life no longer captured his desire, thrilled his imagination, and influenced his life, then God withdrew. No living water fell from heaven, the rivers of life ceased to flow, the pastures dried up, drought overcame the land.

"How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness" (1:18—20).

This was a time unparalleled in history. No form of spiritual life escaped disaster. Desolation was complete and universal. In the language of Hosea (4:1), there was "no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land."

With a passage from Mosheim we shall conclude this chapter:

"It is not necessary to be minute in describing the state of the public religion of this age [century]. For who can doubt that it was debased and corrupt, when the guardians of it were equally destitute of sacred and secular

(Continued on page 9)

## The Anniversary of Our Lord's Birth . . . at Megiddo

THE Abib Feast Days, which began this year at 6:00 Thursday evening, March 20, found an earnest body of believers, as also a goodly number of brethren from afar gathered at our humble Megiddo Mission Church for worship, prayer and praise, inspiration and resolve.

The occasion began with a dramatic production entitled, *OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED*. In the lives of some of the greatest men of Holy Writ is revealed the need for God's second chance. As He proffers this second chance to men who have been wounded in the battle, to men who have fallen and failed, we see exhibited the most beautiful of divine attributes—mercy, longsuffering, and forgiveness.

The lesson of the evening: If divine forgiveness be so vast and boundless, how can human forgiveness be dwarfed and shriveled? If we have needed God's forgiveness and His second chance, shall we not grant the same to our fellow men? "Shall I forgive my brother until seven times?" queried the seemingly bighearted Peter. "Until seventy times seven," replied the greaterhearted Master.

We saw Joshua writhing under the lash of the taskmasters in Egypt, later the successor of Moses by the grace of God's second chance.

Men may climb from small beginnings to great success, but they may also decline from a good start to a humiliating failure at the end. It all depends on the man, not the times or the circumstances. Probably no career ever had a more promising beginning than that of Solomon, son of David. Humility marked his beginning. But he could not stand power and prosperity. He died "an old and foolish king" who would "no more be admonished." It is a sad, sordid story of one of the world's most miserable failures.

Joseph, husband of Mary, was one of those rare souls who was great enough to be content to form background to a drama in which he had no part. When the floodlights of centuries of prophecy converged and focused upon Mary, mother of the Messiah, he was essentially there, but simply background. Yet by accepting that position, he became one of the world's truest gentlemen.

Peter! Here was a man we really know, because he was so like ourselves. He needed God's second chance, even as we, and he used it well. Originally he was a strange bundle of contradictions: earthy, boastful, impetuous, talkative, cowardly, violent. One might wonder why Jesus should choose for one of His disciples such a mixture of good and evil. It was because He could look past the evil and see the good—the warmhearted loyalty, the fervid zeal, the leadership, the possibilities of a rock-hard courage, which should mark this rough-hewn character, once he was truly converted. Peter manifested more courage in denouncing the sin of the men who had crucified his Lord than ever cowardice in his earlier denial.

The record reveals nothing of Stephen's early life, but we know that he, too, needed, God's second chance. All have needed it save the Son of God Himself. To Stephen God's second chance was an opportunity which he used with perhaps unsurpassed rapidity. He emerges from the shadows, a man "of honest report, . . . full of faith and power," to appointment as member of the board of deacons in the Jerusalem church. Men of the synagogue,

being unable to resist his wisdom, resorted to physical torture, as men have always done. Stephen died, the first martyr after Christ.

Such is the force of tradition that we are inclined to think of the Apostle John as almost another species, too good for this world, far beyond our reach, utterly unlike the very human Peter. Yet the known facts do not justify this picture. John, too, had his troubles. Not for nothing did Jesus name him a "son of thunder." Unlawful pride and ambition more than once led him into transgression; a somewhat vindictive nature earned him more than one sharp rebuke. John, too, slept in Gethsemane; he, too, ran for his life when his Lord was taken. Yet even these grave lapses were forgiven, by the grace of God's second chance. Later his hard-earned hundredfold of blessings rained down in the seven thunders on Patmos.

Thus the drama concluded, and we were comforted to realize that greater characters than we have needed God's second chance and have thus found *opportunities unlimited* to rise from the depths of failure to the heights of achievement.

In the Morning Worship Service on Friday we lifted heart and voice in adoration to the Babe of Bethlehem, the Man of Galilee, the Prince of the kings of the world to come. Principal feature was the sermon delivered by Brother Clyde Branham, "Christ—Yesterday, Today, and Forever," which appears in this issue. Its message: the eternal truth of God, personified in the life of Christ, changes never. In our quest for truth, or, in other words, in our effort to comprehend, embrace and relive the Christ-life, we need not fear change; for without change there can be no progress, and without progress there can be no arrival at our goal—eternal truth exemplified in our own human flesh.

Dinner was served in the church dining room to 195 persons.

The children contributed their ever delightful program in the afternoon. Special features included the "Rose of Sharon" orchestra, a dramatic skit, "Salesmen for God," excellently presented by four children of visiting brethren from Bright, Ontario, a poem by a young lad whose message was that *it takes a man* to smile when others frown, to praise when others criticize, to trust when others worry, to help when others hinder. One young lassie mounted the rostrum "our hearts to cheer with her pleasant song." Another expressed her intention to keep her religion busy, for she had discovered that true religion thrives on action. Another voiced her high regard for the lad, I Can, and her disgust with I Can't.

The evening found us again in assembly for the concluding thoughts of the occasion. Brother Kenneth Flowerday delivered the principal address, "Gifts for the King," not gold, frankincense and myrrh, but love, cheer and a perfect heart.

We are assured that everyone in attendance, both from near and far, felt that it was good to have been here, to have experienced the Christian friendship and warm fellowship which prevailed.

And now we turn our faces to higher heights this bright new year.



## DYNAMIC FAITH

"DYNAMIC" means "energetic, forceful; the opposite of static," or stationary. It comes from the Greek *dynamai*, "to be able," through *dynamos*—"power." The English words of its family are few: dynamo, dynamite. All have a strong sound, all suggest action, force, work.

The vital principle of the physical universe is motion. Everything, from the electron to the galaxy, is in motion, doing something, going somewhere. And so are we. Our days, our years, our lives, are not without significance. We are working, but how, and for whom? We are going somewhere, but where? Forward, or backward?

Power, to be useful, must not only be potential, but released; not only released, but connected. The finest vehicle is only a troublesome heap of junk unless it has fuel of the proper grade, utilized and converted, and the resulting power transmitted to the wheels.

The fuel, the spark, the power that makes us go where we desire to go is faith, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith in its loosest sense is one of the commonest of commodities. The business of the world runs on faith. Let a bank, or a product, or an administration lose the confidence of the public, and it is finished. Every man has faith in something, worthy or unworthy. And while faith is often betrayed and abused, it is still a virtue. It is a sad and miserable condition to have faith in no one. There is a desired balance, but it is better to be too trusting than too suspicious.

But whatever the benefits for this life of this sort of faith, there is but one faith which can carry us across the cold darkness of space into God's World of Tomorrow. This is the "faith once delivered to the saints," the faith which comes by hearing the Word of God. This power source is of tested quality; in Hebrews 11 we have a list of those who have successfully used it under varying conditions to reach their goal. If used intelligently, according to directions, it cannot fail. But carelessness can produce failure, even with this. If diluted with human ideas, or choked with the interests of this life, or short-circuited by cherished sins, faith is weakened. Trouble upon trouble develops; we limp along slower and slower, until at last, if we have not broken down completely, we are chased off the highway as a nuisance and a menace.

Faith, like divine wisdom, is altogether admirable; but how to acquire and retain it is often something else again. It is easy enough to say, "Just believe," but it is not that simple, nor is that the kind of faith required. The formula may be stated simply enough: to acquire this living, dynamic faith, seek as for silver and search as for hid treasures. To retain it, practice it. Yet these things are not at all simple or easy. The best things in life—there is nothing better than faith—are never easy.

If our faith is strong, perhaps we should make an effort to be more patient and understanding with those to whom faith does not come easily. Individuals differ, and what is perfectly obvious to us may not seem so to our neighbor, and *vice versa*. The ability to doubt can be a positive virtue, for it is not until we begin to doubt the fables that we recognize and accept the truth. This must have been what Tennyson had in mind when he wrote,

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds."

But, like faith, doubt must have its proper object, or it becomes destructive; and when it becomes habitual or is misdirected it is a tragedy of the deepest shade. It is hard for the over-confident or the opinionated to recognize the fact that honest doubt is no more voluntary than physical or mental disease. It is not a pleasant thing, not a thing asked for, sought for, and deliberately entertained; and the doubter would give the world to be free from the doubts which torture him. His condition may possibly be his own fault, the result of past errors, but even acknowledgment of this fact does not always help the immediate problem of how to get rid of doubt. It is certain that the answer is not harsh judgment, a "holier than thou" attitude, or ostracism by those who are under vows to "support the weak."

Fortunately, by right habit the vicious cycle of doubt can be broken. By proper mental hygiene, by right thinking and reading and association, faith can be revived and cultivated and strengthened.

It can be done, but, again, it will not be easy. Merely saying, "I *must* believe; I *will* believe," will not do it. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, not by autosuggestion. It will require a growing honesty, a desperate concentration, a sense of eternal life and eternal death in the balance, an overpowering love of life, an eternal vigilance. "Be watchful," said Jesus to the faltering church of Sardis, "and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." If Sardis could do it, so can we.

To retain faith, as we said at first, *practice* it. Faith without works, and works without faith, is power unconnected. An automobile with no transmission or drive-shaft can coast down hills, but the upgrades soon slow and halt it. So it may be possible for our works to outrun a faltering faith, for a while; but inevitably we lose speed to the point where the best we can hope for is to hold our own, then merely to slow down the rate of deterioration; until at last comes the ignominious end of our hopes and all that we might have been. Without faith it is impossible to please God, or to accomplish anything else of value.

Modern engineering, with all its progress, has not yet found a way to use more than a fraction of the energy contained in any source of power. Even so the possibilities of faith have never been explored. In this age we walk by naked faith alone, in the midst of a confused and confusing world. Perhaps our faith, faulty though it may be, is doing more for us right now than we realize. As we keep it in lively exercise and let it lead us, it will do still more. "This is not all that God can give." The steep grades of life may test our faith, and the "swelling of Jordan" will be the final and supreme test; but if we have prepared ourselves, the swelling of Jordan will be easier than now. Not until the cycles of eternity begin to unroll before us and our minds are expanded to comprehend the "things which God hath prepared for them that love him," will we know fully the power and the rewards of a dynamic faith.

"We'll wonder then why we have ever doubted,  
Or why our hearts have ever weary grown,  
So great will be our joy beholding Jesus  
When He shall reign upon His glorious throne."



## THE GREAT APOSTASY

*(Continued from page 6)*

knowledge, and of virtue, and when even the first men in the church exhibited examples of the grossest vices? The people at large were wholly absorbed in superstition, and concerned themselves with nothing but statues, images, relics, and the futile rites which the caprice of their priests enjoined upon them. . . . For rude as this age was, and ignorant in general of the true revealed religion, yet those few fragments as it were of Christianity which were exhibited and explained to the people, were sufficient to show even to the illiterate and the peasantry that the religion publicly inculcated was not the true religion of Christ, that Christ required of his followers things wholly different from those exhibited in the discourses and in the lives and morals of the clergy. . . . Those however who undertook the great work of reforming the church, were for the most part incompetent to the task, and by their solicitude to avoid some faults, they ran into others. . . . This will not appear strange to one who is well acquainted with those unhappy times. Hence *these reformers often mixed much that was false, with little that was true.*"

Of the twelfth century we read:

"So many causes conspired to debase religion, and to tarnish and obscure its luster by numberless inventions of human ingenuity, that it may seem strange it was not wholly destroyed. . . . Such as would not obey their laws, or showed that they regarded the Holy Scriptures more than the authority of the Roman see, were cruelly destroyed with fire and sword. . . . Hence instead of religion, astonishing superstition and ignorance reigned everywhere among the people."\*

The night of the Apostasy was long and dark, but not interminable. Let us look ahead.

Next Issue: FROM DARKNESS TO DAWN

\* *Ecclesiastical History.* —MOSHEIM.

## SATISFIED

Some day, when all my heartaches cease,  
And I shall rest in perfect peace;  
Where pain and care cannot annoy,  
Then sweetest pleasures I'll enjoy.

Some day, when I am free from sin,  
All spotless, clean, and pure within;  
Then I shall stand by Jesus' side,  
Forever with Him to abide.

Some day, when burdens are laid down,  
And I receive the victor's crown;  
I shall be free from every fear  
And God will wipe away each tear.

Some day, when on my list'ning ear  
Shall fall the song of joy and cheer;  
When I shall tread the golden street,  
And there the loved and faithful greet;

'Tis then I shall be satisfied  
To stand with all the purified,  
When I have won the glorious race  
And see my Saviour face to face.

## House Cleaning Time

When Winter's chill gives way to Spring,  
The snow is gone; and everything  
Outside takes on a different hue;  
Then there is one thing we must do.

*All through the house, right from the top  
To cellar floor, we dare not stop  
Until we clean out the debris  
Not meant for other eyes to see.*

The windows, and the curtains, too,  
The floors, and cupboards, not a few,  
Must all be washed so shining clean  
That not a speck of dirt is seen.

*But there is one thing worse than dirt  
That will redound to our own hurt:  
The refuse harbored in the heart,  
From which we hesitate to part.*

Let's search the closets of our mind  
To see what rubbish we can find,  
With but one aim: to cast it out,  
To put each useless thought to rout.

*Those hidden roots of bitterness  
We must dig out and dispossess;  
The jealousy, and envy, too—  
We'll bid those loiterers "Adieu!"*

Impatience takes up needed room  
Where flowers of content should bloom;  
And worse than useless is the pride,  
Behind which other evils hide.

*We must discard all foolishness,  
As something that can never bless;  
Nor can we harbor anger long,  
If we would use our lips in song.*

So many evils tend to lurk  
In darkened corners, when we shirk  
Our cleaning, so we must beware,  
And use a good detergent there.

*Each secret sin, no matter what  
It is that tends to cause a blot,  
Must find another resting place.  
They will our temple walls deface.*

God's temple, or His children dear,  
Is holy, naught must there appear  
That will defile; without, within,  
There must be found no taint of sin.

*We must protect our royal state  
And let no filth accumulate,  
If we would welcome as our Guest  
Our Saviour, and by Him be blest.*

—L. L. S.

## BE OF GOOD CHEER

All sunny skies would be too bright,  
All morning hours mean too much light,  
All laughing days too gay a strain;  
There must be clouds, and night, and rain,  
And shut-in days, to make us see  
The beauty of life's tapestry!

# Meditations

## On the Word

*"For wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it" (Ecclesiastes 7: 12).*

From the dawn of human life on our planet, man has felt and experienced the need of defense, of protection from surrounding dangers. With the growth of civilization, the need of defense has not lessened but rather increased, for with new discoveries have come new problems and new perils. Today man's most crying need is protection from himself, from the consequences of his own devilish ingenuity; this, in spite of the fact that never before has there been so much money or so much worldly wisdom in circulation. If this be civilization, then may we be defended from it!

The two things compared, or rather contrasted, in our text, are obviously of absurdly unequal value. Intelligence was giving life, or survival, to the savage, thousands of years before money was dreamed of. And certainly no one would think of mentioning the Divine wisdom in the same breath with mere money, even though it might be somewhat embarrassing to many if asked which they were pursuing with the greater fervor. But let no one belittle the power of money. Ever since man first employed an artificial medium of exchange, money has talked, and loudly. So long as it is honestly manipulated and its representative value maintained, money is a defense against many things. When facing old age or physical disability, a little of the "mammon of unrighteousness" is a very convenient thing. Those who profess to utterly despise money would not care to try to get along without it, and very often a sneering remark about "filthy lucre" means only "sour grapes."

We are speaking, of course, of this life only. And yet even in this life there are voids which money cannot fill—the yearnings of the spirit for freedom from sin's bondage, the cravings of the mind for the secrets of the universe, the need of true companionship, of loyal and unselfish friends. The Preacher from whom our text is taken knew all about it; he spoke from experience. It was he who wrote,

"I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: . . . I got me servants and maidens . . . also I had great possessions . . . above all that were in Jerusalem before me; I gathered me also silver and gold . . . men singers and women singers . . . musical instruments of all sorts. So I was great . . . and whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, . . . and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (Eccl. 2: 4—11). He it was also who wrote, no doubt from the bitterness of personal frustration, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Prov. 15: 17). There are some things—many things—which money cannot buy; and the best of them are supplied only by Divine wisdom.

But when all these things, and much more in the same

vein, are considered, it still remains a matter of individual preference. Many men and women have no desire for the rewards of wisdom; for them money and its power are a sufficient defense. If they can procure it, they are happy; if not, they are doubly frustrated and miserable; still their choice remains the same. This class can be eliminated from the equation. But there are a multitude who stand at the crossroads, torn by conflicting emotions—the old, old struggle between tangibles and intangibles, between the things which are seen and the things which are not seen. The visible Present will always win over the invisible Future unless we have eyes of faith, illuminated by the promises of God in His revealed Word.

"Consider your ways," cries the prophet (Haggai 1: 7). There are times when an hour's serious consideration is worth more than a month of blind effort. Consider that life, at best, is brief. "If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him consider the days of darkness; for they shall be many" (Eccl. 11: 8). Robert Ingersoll said it well, as he stood at the grave of his brother:

"For whether in mid-sea or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck must mark at last the end of each and all. And every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love and every moment jeweled with a joy, will, at its close, become a tragedy as sad, and deep, and dark as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death."

What then? The question stands. What then?

Yes, to each individual there will come a time when all human effort and accomplishment, all the achievements of art and science and statesmanship, the hopes and fears of all the years, will add up to exactly nothing. Not always at the end of threescore and ten, or fourscore years; but in the bloom of youth or at the height of manhood's activity, Death may let himself in with his master-key and quietly say, "We'll go now."

Our perspective will change swiftly then. Money will no longer be a defense; it has lost its power. Millions cannot purchase a single day, or even an hour. A bronze casket and a lofty monument are a poor substitute for life. Worldly wisdom is weak, for the aches of the philosopher differ no whit from those of the idiot. This is—for most—the end.

It is at this point that Wisdom takes over. Wisdom alone holds a master-key more potent than that of Death. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him. Natural death is but an interlude for those who have in life chosen wisdom, the better part which shall not be taken away. "All things that pertain unto life and godliness" come through knowledge, the written record of God's will and His dealings (II Peter 1: 2, 3). Acquiring and accepting this knowledge unites us with God mentally. Applying that knowledge to the utmost in our daily life makes us in the moral image of God. Here we can rest our case, having reached the limit of our power, trusting the Eternal to complete the Contract and—still through knowledge—change our mortal body into His physical image. This is immortality, eternal life, the reward of wisdom. Whether waking or sleeping, the end result will be the same, for Wisdom's key will cause the dead in Christ to stand again in the day of Resurrection when this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and we shall be changed (I Cor. 15: 53).

# Your Questions Answered



## BIBLICAL PERSONAL CURRENT

Do you have a question? Personal replies to Biblical questions will be sent to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

**Please explain Matt. 19: 9 concerning divorce.**

The passage reads, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery." According to the Great Teacher, fornication is the only legitimate cause for a man to put away his wife.

"And whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." The law of God is much more strict than the law of the land. In this country a man must have a divorce before he can marry again. But the law of God does not allow him who has put his wife away for fornication to marry another while his first wife lives.

The law of God allows only one living companion. The only release is the death of one. Then the other is free to marry one who also is either single, or has no living companion.

Paul in Rom. 7: 1—3 states the following: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

This divorce law of God is one of the finest laws a nation can live by, as it keeps families intact, makes for clean living, and promotes high morality.

**Do you think the devil has the most power in our government today?**

We do not believe, according to popular theological fiction, in the existence of a personal devil, whether he be such a one as pictured by medieval writers who keeps the flames of hell burning and tempts people to wrong doing, or one who was once a bright angel but now in his fallen state seeks to destroy humanity. The only devil we believe in is such as we can talk with and see. Men and women who oppose the way of Christ are called devils as were Peter and Judas. See Matt. 16: 23; John 6: 70.

In our government today there are many men who are unscrupulous and seek to further themselves rather than help the country, but there are also men of principle and honesty who do all in their limited power to enforce right and justice.

**How do you think the devil gave those boils to Job (2: 7)?**

We consider the book of Job to be an allegorical narrative and not an account of an actual experience.

**Please explain John 17: 5.**

It reads: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." This text has been used to support the theory of the pre-existence of Christ. But as Christ was born of a woman (Gal. 4: 4) and could not have existed before the woman of whom He was made, He could not have enjoyed any glory with the Father before His birth. However, the Father, knowing all things from the beginning, foresaw the day when Jesus would live His life so

perfectly and glorify God by every act of His life, that He gave Jesus the promise of future glory. Jesus had this future glory by promise and rejoiced in anticipation of it—not before the creation of the literal world, but before this new world to come (Heb. 2: 5) is established.

**Is the day spoken of in Matt. 24: 36 the same period of time as referred to in II Peter 3: 7?**

Matthew 24: 36 refers to the day of the second coming of Christ, the time of which is not revealed.

Second Peter 3: 7 refers to the time of God's judgments upon the earth. It is said to be "the day of judgment," but the actual duration of the judgments is not disclosed. The "heavens and earth," the people—rulers and subjects—must face the judgments of God. The testimony does not refer to the actual destruction of the literal heaven and earth.

**Please compare John 4: 24, "God is a spirit," with Heb. 1: 3 which refers to God as being a person.**

We cannot accept the idea that God is an immaterial Being as is supposed by those who hold that a "spirit" as used in the Bible conveys such a meaning. Much superstition has been built about spirits, ghosts, apparitions, etc. Hebrews 1: 1—3 states specifically that Jesus Christ in His glorified state was made in the express image of His Father's person. In our mortal, dying, corruptible state we cannot begin to understand the nature of a glorified, immortal being, much less the Creator Himself. Paul's words should help us understand that there are different bodies. "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. . . . There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body" (I Cor. 15: 40, 44). Whatever the substance of the Creator or of any immortal, it is real.

**In I Thess. 4: 16 we read that the Lord shall descend and the saints shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and in Matt. 24: 40, 41 we are told that two shall be in the field, the one shall be taken, the other left; two shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, the other left. Do these testimonies refer to the rapture?**

No. The popular belief of the rapture, that the saints with Christ shall be caught away to heaven, is not Scriptural. Many texts teach that Christ and the saints shall reign on the earth. See Rev. 5: 9, 10; Luke 1: 32, 33; Rev. 2: 25, 26; 3: 21.

The first text in question refers to the resurrection of the covenant-makers who together with the living shall be caught away to judgment at Christ's return. Next, after the separation between the faithful and unfaithful, Christ and the saints shall stand on Mount Zion (Zech. 14: 4, 5), not depart to heaven.

The other text in question refers to the same separation in symbolic language. At the return of Christ, two shall be working in the field of the Lord, two women grinding at the mill. In both cases, one shall be taken, the other left. Wheat and tares grow together until the harvest, faithful and unfaithful working side by side in the same field, or grinding at the same mill. So when that day of Judgment comes those who work in the "field" of the Lord, the faithful and unfaithful, will be called to account. The one class shall be "cut off from the earth" but the other shall remain therein forever (Ps. 37: 28, 29).





## Divine Certitudes

TREES are budding into leaf, flowers unfolding to light, birds waking the days with their most enchanting melody, lambkins dancing upon the countrysides in sheer delight. In field and garden eager eyes discern the first blades of emerald green shooting forth in response to the warm rays of the sun.

It is God's glorious Springtime!

For generations uncounted this miracle of nature has never ceased to repeat itself. Could we call our fathers or our father's fathers to witness, all would testify in one unanimous voice that they never saw a winter which did not have its spring.

This order of the seasons—rhythmic as the beating of a drum, regular as the breaking of ocean waves against the strand—holds high significance. It is the confirmation of a covenant made some four millenniums ago. When the flood waters abated, God Almighty gave His pledge to Noah that while the earth remained, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, should not cease (Gen. 8: 22). Since that distant day, some four thousand times mankind has witnessed the pledge confirmed.

Not only are we to recognize the rotation of the seasons as the confirmation of a divine covenant, but the Great Eternal calls upon us to accept budding springtime and golden harvest as a token that every promise upon the Sacred Page shall likewise be fulfilled with the same invariable precision.

He declares, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not

thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55: 10, 11).

The word of His mouth, proclaimed by prophets, corroborated by Jesus, verified by angels on Olivet, and echoed by apostles, is "*Behold, he cometh.*" The scrolls of the prophets are radiant with this Messianic hope; it is the throbbing theme of the Gospels; the Revelation of Jesus Christ is vibrant with the same ringing note, "Surely I come quickly."

The cycle of the seasons is our guarantee, signed with God's immortal signature. Whoever saw a winter without a spring; whoever saw a seedtime without a harvest? They only have reason to doubt the Second Advent.

These are DIVINE CERTITUDES!

. . . . .

I never see a tree bud into leaf,  
Or watch a daffodil unfold to light,  
Or feel the heat of summer's noonday sun  
That brings full soon the golden harvest  
ripe,

I never watch the seasons rhythmic flight  
Without rememb'ring in my heart of hearts  
The edict from on High: THE LORD SHALL  
COME!

Creation speaks the word—and doubt departs.

If Nature fails, His promise, too, is void;  
But No; God is no man that He should lie,  
Nor like frail mortals does He change His  
mind;

Upon His every word we can rely.



